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University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

Office of News and Publications
Missoula, MT 59812
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April 26, 1991

UM ALUMNUS A.B. GUTHRIE DIES

MISSOULA --

University of Montana President George Dennison expressed condolences today to the widow, family and friends of A.B. Guthrie, who died this morning at his home near Choteau. He was 90 years old and had been in failing health for the past several years.

"Bud Guthrie was a significant American writer," Dennison said. "As a literary presence in the state, he profoundly influenced our identity as Montanans. His death is a major loss to us all."

A 1923 graduate of the University's School of Journalism, Guthrie won the Pulitzer Prize in 1950 for his third novel, The Way West. His second book, The Big Sky, has been printed at least 10 times in hardback and eleven times in paperback. His screenplay for the Western movie "Shane" was nominated for an Academy Award.

Born in Bedford, Ind., in 1901, Guthrie was an infant when his family moved to Choteau where his father was the first principal of the Teton County Free High School. Guthrie attended the University of Washington and after a year transferred to The University of Montana. After college, Guthrie spent time in California, Montana, and New York before settling in to a reporter's job in Lexington, Ky.

There he married his first wife, Harriet. They had two children, Bert and Helen. The Guthries moved back to Montana in 1953 and divorced in 1962. In 1969 he married Carol Bischman in Great Falls.

(more)

Guthrie.rl--add one

In 1944 he won a Neiman Fellowship at Harvard University, where he began The Big Sky. In 1949 UM awarded him an honorary doctorate of literature, and in 1984 he won its Distinguished Alumni Award.

This past winter he completed an article for Modern Maturity magazine and his most recent book, A Field Guide to Writing Fiction, was released this month by HarperCollins.

"It's a person's duty to live up to the very best he was born with," Guthrie said in an interview published in the fall 1990 Montanan, UM's alumni magazine. "Not to do that is sinful."

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JD/dp

Faxed release to Missoulian, KGVO, KPAX, KTMF, KECI, Great Falls Tribune; and, in addition, Montanan article to Missoulian and Tribune; release and magazine dropped off at KUFM and Kaimin Guthrie.rl